

JFK Assassination System
Identification Form

Date: 5/13/201

Agency Information

AGENCY : FBI
RECORD NUMBER : 124-90143-10170
RECORD SERIES : HQ
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 100-370750-NR

Released under the John
F. Kennedy
Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992
(44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 54460 Date:
10-04-2017

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : FBI
FROM : LA
TO : HQ

TITLE :

DATE : 07/05/1943
PAGES : 27

SUBJECTS :

HERBERT JOSEPH BIBERMAN
JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified
RESTRICTIONS : 4
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 10/09/1998

OPENING CRITERIA : INDEFINITE

COMMENTS : RPT

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

FILE NO. **100-6769**

REPORT MADE AT LOS ANGELES	DATE WHEN MADE 7/5/43	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 4/11 - 6/30/43	REPORT MADE BY JOHN R. VICARS	KPM
TITLE HERBERT JOSEPH BIBERMAN, et al			CHARACTER OF CASE INTERNAL SECURITY - R CUSTODIAL DETENTION	

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

HERBERT BIBERMAN directed skit for CIO Rally 4/24/43. LAWSON also participated. LAWSON is member of Executive Board of Hollywood Democratic Committee, and BIBERMAN wrote "Aim and Purposes" leaflet for this organization. LAWSON is presently instructor in Los Angeles Workers School; will continue instructions in new summer term, beginning August 6th. [BIBERMAN directed MARGARET MAITZ to attend CP State Convention delegate meeting 5/14/43 and delivered credentials therefor to her.] BIBERMAN sought as director of skit for WILLIAM Z. FOSTER rally 7/18/43 under auspices Los Angeles County CP. Apparent Communist meetings attended by subjects listed. Bank accounts monitored [and results of mail covers set out.]

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OTHERWISE

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DATE 6-19-95 BY SP6/SS/STP/ldk
(JFK)

- P - DECLASSIFIED BY
ON 4-15-82

REFERENCE:

Bureau File 100-24499.
Report of Special Agent JOHN R. VICARS,
Los Angeles, California, April 20, 1943.

DETAILS:

Division.

HERBERT JOSEPH BIBERMAN and JOHN HOWARD LAWSON are on the Key Figure List of the Los Angeles Field

LAWSON-BIBERMAN Activity in the
CIO-PHILIP MURRAY Reception

Classified by 6171/17
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APPROVED AND
FORWARDED:

The "Los Angeles Times" dated April 23, 1943, in an

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meeting. He also directed that if a committee was appointed at the mobilization meeting, he would be very happy to sit in with it, together with BILL OLIVER and to work on the script, but he did not want to assume the responsibility. BIBERMAN then conferred with BILL OLIVER and received confirmation that OLIVER would attend the HOLLYWOOD WRITERS MOBILIZATION meeting. BIBERMAN directed that OLIVER ask for a committee and when it is formed, BIBERMAN suggested that it would be useful if he (BIBERMAN) and OLIVER and the committee all worked on the skit together. He also directed that OLIVER should bring along the material that BIBERMAN prepared for CONNELLY, as parts of it could be used as a basis from which to work. According to the informant, BIBERMAN's skit involved four workers, including a negro worker and a woman worker. *Q*

On April 16, 1943, BILL OLIVER, whom the informant advised is a member of the Newspaper Guild, conferred with BIBERMAN and told him that the HOLLYWOOD WRITERS MOBILIZATION committee writing the show for the CIO meeting would hold a conference at the home of PAUL JARRICO, 727 Linda Flora Drive, West Los Angeles, Sunday, April 18th, at 12:00 noon. *Q*

BIBERMAN was also active in soliciting Hollywood people to participate in the skit. He attempted to get JOHN SHEPARD, who, apparently, is the husband of ANNE REVERE, but was advised that he was in Officers Training for the Navy. However, he did obtain RUSSELL GLEASON, 1580 Queens Road; LIONEL STANFEC, 7220 Franklin; MARC LAWRENCE; LENA HORNE (negro), 1229 Horn Avenue; ELLIOTT SULLIVAN, 6213 Glen Airy Way, Los Angeles; and STEPHEN BARCLAY. He also attempted to get WALTER ABEL through FRANK TUTTLE, but was unsuccessful. *Q*

Of those obtained, it should be noted that RUSSELL GLEASON is a member of the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE, reported to be the newest of the Communist front organizations among the movie industry people; LIONEL STANFEC was a Communist, according to JOHN L. LEECH, former Executive Secretary of the Los Angeles County Communist Party, a few years ago and still reportedly follows the Communist Party line. LENA HORNE (Negro) has been given much attention by the "People's World", Communist West Coast newspaper, and is reportedly a very close associate of ORSON WELLES. ELLIOTT SULLIVAN, according to Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1357, participated in the skit given at the Communist Party picnic, May 2, 1943, and also has been spotted in attendance by the writer at meetings at which ELIZABETH LEACH, Northwest Section Organizer, has been in attendance. *Q*

In attempting to obtain LENA HORNE to act in this skit, BIBERMAN conferred with REVELS CAYTON and also HYMAN S. KRAFT, also known as HY KRAFT, but after they were unsuccessful for various reasons in getting *Q*

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her consent, BIBERMAN conferred with her, and secured her immediate consent, according to Confidential National Defense Informant LA HB-1. (X)u

The "Labor Herald", Friday, April 30, 1943, issue, has the following to say about the contribution of Hollywood to this great rally:

"Hollywood, film capital of the world, brought out its best performers for the great rally. Preceding MURRAY's talk was a dramatic skit written, directed, and acted by top flight performers from movieland. Authors of the play were PAUL JARRICO and EARL ROBINSON; HERBERT BIBERMAN, well known Hollywood and Broadway director, staged the show. The cast included LIONEL STANPEC, LENA HORNE, MARC LAWRENCE, FRED GRAFF, ART SMITH, VICTOR KILIAN, DANNY MANN, ELLIOTT SULLIVAN, and STEPHEN BARCLAY."

JARRICO, it will be recalled, has been a frequent associate of BIBERMAN in the past, is a member of the LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WRITERS, the HOLLYWOOD WRITERS MOBILIZATION, and was an instructor at the School for Writers sponsored by the Hollywood Chapter of the LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WRITERS. His true name is believed to be ISRAEL SHAPIRO. [It appeared to Confidential National Defense Informant LA HB-1 that TOM VAN DYKE, a known Communist and newscaster on the CIO "Our Daily Bread" program, performed the liaison work between CONNELLY and BIBERMAN, it having been noted by the informant that VAN DYKE would leave material at LARRY EDMUND's Book Shop for BIBERMAN at the request of CONNELLY. Informant advised that this material referred to the script which CONNELLY had the final o.k. on. BIBERMAN, according to the informant, spent all of Saturday, April 24th, at the Olympic Auditorium directing a rehearsal for the skit. PHIL CONNELLY was also in attendance at the rehearsal part of the time.] (X)u

BIBERMAN-LANSON Activity in the
HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

As was noted in reference report, BIBERMAN and LANSON were active in the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE, which, according to Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1138, appears to be the newest Communist front organization among the Hollywood motion picture people. A leaflet published by the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE states that this organization was launched January 14, 1943, as an association of voters having its origin in the motion picture community. The pamphlet specifically states, "The Hollywood Democratic Committee is not directly affiliated with the Democratic Party organization, although it regards the Democratic Party as the rallying point for liberal forces in California."

In this connection, it is interesting to note that on (X)u

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June 2, 1943, Confidential National Defense Informant LA HB-1 advised that while BIBERMAN and an unidentified man were in conference concerning development of the policy of the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE, BIBERMAN stated, "There is one policy--the need for progressive action and that action can come about here in California only through the Democratic Party." According to the informant, the unidentified man agreed with BIBERMAN and said, "Yes, and if we were in the South, we would have to progress there through the Republican Party." Apparently, the tactics of the Communist Party of boring from within are also in use in this organization. (S) u

Among the officers listed in the above mentioned pamphlet who have been associates of BIBERMAN and LAWSON are GEORGE PEPPER, Executive Secretary, who, according to Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1357, is a Communist functionary in the Musicians Branch of the Northwest Section; WALTER ABEL; MARC CONNELLY; RUSSELL GLEASON; D. A. DORAN; LOUIS HARRIS; Mrs. HENRY MYERS, also known as BARBARA MYERS; and Mrs. FRANK TUTTLE. All of those named there are either officers or members of the Executive Board. Also listed as a member of the Executive Board is JOHN HOWARD LAWSON. (S) u

BIBERMAN, according to Confidential National Defense Informant LA HB-1, has formed the BEACHWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE, which is affiliated with the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE. It appears to be more or less of a precinct club composed of people in BIBERMAN's neighborhood, which is known as Hollywoodland. (S) u

It was ascertained on April 14, 1943, from this informant that GEORGE PEPPER conferred with HERBERT BIBERMAN, and it was learned that BIBERMAN was planning a rally to be sponsored by the BEACHWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE at the Chermoya School, Beachwood and Franklin Avenues, April 29th, at which LLOYD DAVIES, elected Councilman in the recent city elections, will be invited to speak. BIBERMAN suggested that someone with a big name be obtained to speak for the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE, and PEPPER suggested GLORIA STUART who, PEPPER STATED, was always happy to do such things. The purpose of this meeting was the rally behind FAY ALLEN, Negress, who was engaged in a runoff for a post on the city Board of Education. It should be noted here that FAY ALLEN received strong Communist Party support in this runoff election. (S) u

On April 15, 1943, BIBERMAN conferred with HENRY MYERS concerning a BEACHWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB meeting at the BIBERMAN home that evening in order to plan for the meeting at the school. It was expected that 50 to 75 people would attend, and BIBERMAN was anxious to get EDDIE ELISCU to sing a few songs, namely, "Damn the Torpedo", "Mr. JUAREZ", and "Mr. Lincoln". On the same date BIBERMAN secured EDDIE ELISCU for this (S) u

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It is to be noted that an informant of the Los Angeles Office reported that at a branch meeting held that week an announcement was made of this meeting at the home of MARY ELEY, and the branch members were invited to attend. MARY R. ELEY, 5921 Chula Vista, Los Angeles, according to records of Source "A", was a new member of the Communist Party, assigned to Branch Q, Northwest Section, April 15, 1943. She holds Communist Party Book No. 36148. (X)U

All contacts by BIBERMAN in connection with the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE activities noted areas follows: (X)U

On April 29, 1943, BARBARA MYERS contacted GALE SONDERGAARD, congratulating her on her performance the previous evening at the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE rally described previously, and requested that she mail a copy of her script to a MAURICE CLARK, 1761 North Van Ness as he would like to have it. (X)U

On April 26, 1943, HERBERT BIBERMAN conferred with GEORGE PEPPER and requested BIBERMAN to turn in his unsold tickets to ANN POLLOCK, 1455 Laurel, the following day. This undoubtedly refers to tickets to the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE rally held April 28th. (X)U

On April 27, 1943, BARBARA MYERS conferred with HERBERT BIBERMAN, advising him that they were making a special drive, and that IRVING PICHEL had been appointed to do the collecting. BIBERMAN suggested that ANN POLLOCK be contacted for suggestions. (X)U

On June 7, 1943, it was ascertained by the informant that there was to be a meeting at the home of RUSSELL LAMBEAU, 3124 Belden Drive, Telephone - Granite 5446, that evening of the BEACHWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE. (X)U

A surveillance was maintained by Special Agent DAVID A. MAC CULLOCH and the writer, and it was observed that HERBERT BIBERMAN, GALE SONDERGAARD, EDWARD BIBERMAN, and SONJA DAHL BIBERMAN entered the LAMBEAU home. No other cars were noted in the vicinity until well past the time for the meeting, although an unidentified car let out three or four people. Other people scheduled to attend were Mrs. SULLIVAN (possibly Mrs. ELLIOTT SULLIVAN), GEORGE VOGER, and a Miss BATESON (last two are phonetic).

Confidential National Defense Informant IA-1138 attended a meeting of the HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE, Wednesday, June 16, 1943, at the Hollywood-Roosevelt Hotel, the announced purpose of which was to take up the question of the recent zoot suit riots in Los Angeles. About

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150 were present, most of whom are connected with the motion picture industry. Informant's report states, "The usual contingent of Communists, fellow travelers, and sympathizers were on hand and dominated the meeting." "About one dozen Negroes were present. No distinguishable Mexicans were present in the audience."

Among the speakers were CARL HOLTON, Director of the California Youth Authority and a member of a Special Committee appointed by Governor WARREN to investigate the Zoot Suit activities. He made no violent attacks on the police and law enforcement agencies. (The Communists blame the police and the press for the Zoot Suit riots). His remarks were greeted with a great amount of enthusiasm. Other speakers included Mrs. CHARLOTTA A. BASS, Negress and editor of the "California Eagle", weekly colored newspaper in Los Angeles and reported follower of the Communist Party line; CAREY McWILLIAMS, former Director of Housing and Immigration in the State of California, whom the informant describes as long identified with Communist activity, and one of the National Committee of the AMERICAN PEACE MOBILIZATION. He indicted the press, the police department, and the fifth columns for the Zoot Suit riots. He was received with much enthusiasm. JOHN HOWARD LAWSON was in attendance at this meeting, according to the informant.

BIBERMAN-LAWSON Direct Communist
Party Associations and Activities.

On April 14, 1943, Confidential National Defense Informant LA HB-1 advised that MARJORIE FISKE conferred with BIBERMAN advising him that the writing on the "May 2nd thing" was incomplete. This undoubtedly refers to the script for the pageant of the Communist May Day carnival, which, according to Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1357, was written by MILTON SMITH, screen writer. (S)u

On April 26, 1943, informant advised that BIBERMAN conferred with VYRL HOPPER, at which time she advised him she was being investigated by Lockheed Aircraft where she is employed. She wondered if they had contacted BIBERMAN as a former employer. BIBERMAN advised that he had not been contacted. (S)u

On April 27, 1943, BIBERMAN sent a telegram to HOPPER, 1559 North Edgemont, requesting that she contact him that evening. (S)u

The 1942 City Directory lists VYRL HOPPER as the wife of DE WOLF F. HOPPER, a clothes presser. VYRL HOPPER, according to Source "B", was former Secretary to GALE SONDERGAARD. It will be recalled that in reference report of the writer, it was indicated that BIBERMAN may have recruited VYRL HOPPER into the Communist Party. It was noted from records (S)u

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versation refers to Communist Party recruits, it should be noted that the recruiting drive ended May 2, 1943, and a compilation of the recruits should have been completed by the date of this conference, May 11th. Furthermore, the Northwest Section is composed of shop units, that is, musicians are in one branch, writers in another, technicians in another, etc. The fact that BARBARA was in possession of these breakdowns would also indicate she was either a Section Membership Director or possibly Recruiting Drive Director of this section. A further indication of BARBARA's character was shown on May 29, 1943, when, according to the informant, she conferred with BIBERMAN, advising him that she would turn over all of her "stuff" to MARJORIE FISKE since she was "starting life over again and getting away from mathematics." (S) u

Again, on May 11, 1943, ELIZABETH LEACH conferred with BIBERMAN, asking BIBERMAN's advice as to who should "finish up BARBARA's work since BARBARA had suddenly gone to New York and left all of her records with ELIZABETH LEACH. As stated before, all of these indications might mean that BARBARA MYERS was Membership Director or possibly Recruiting Drive Director. BIBERMAN's leadership is shown by the fact that when ELIZABETH LEACH, who is the organizer, requested that BIBERMAN name a person to finish up BARBARA's work, and BIBERMAN directed that MARGARET WALTZ should help ELIZABETH out on the remainder, if necessary." (S) u

BIBERMAN's direction is further shown by the fact that on May 12, 1943, ELIZABETH LEACH conferred with BIBERMAN, and after advising him that BARBARA MYERS had left town, there arose the question as to who should replace BARBARA at a meeting to be held at the Alexandria Hotel the following Friday evening, May 14th. This meeting was known to the Los Angeles Office as being a meeting of all branch delegates to the Special State Convention to be held May 23, 1943, at San Francisco. BIBERMAN told ELIZABETH he would try and get MARGARET WALTZ to attend the meeting. He then contacted MARGARET WALTZ, according to Confidential National Defense Informant LA HB-1, and told her that BARBARA MYERS had gone to New York and would not be back until June 1st, and that MARGARET should take over the Friday evening meeting at the Alexandria Hotel. BIBERMAN said, "I have a piece of credential material to give you for this meeting." This credential material is known to the Los Angeles Office as being the credentials which every branch delegate had to carry in order to be allowed admission to the delegate meeting at the Alexandria Hotel, May 14, 1943. According to Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1357, each person who is elected as Branch Delegate was given one of these credentials. One secured by this informant and retained by the Los Angeles Office reads in part as follows: "Emergency State Convention of the Communist Party of California, May 23, 1943, 121 Haight Street, San Francisco, California." A block head then reads, "DELEGATE's CREDENTIAL", his name, address, branch, and county (S) u

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representative, and then listed under this the following statement, "This Comrade has been officially elected delegate to the Emergency State Convention of the Communist Party of California to be held on May 23, 1943, in San Francisco, California." Two lines then follow, one for the signature of the County Organizer and one for the signature of the Delegate. These credentials were made in duplicate and one delivered to the Delegate and one transmitted to the State Headquarters in San Francisco. (X)

In view of this information Special Agents DAVID A. MAC CULLOCH and SIMON E. LOCHER instituted a surveillance at the home of MARGARET MALTZ, 6526 Lindenhurst, on the evening of May 14, 1943, and observed MALTZ driving her husband's car, bearing California License 7 W 4053, to a parking lot near 5th and Spring, and go by foot to the Alexandria Hotel, Mezzanine Floor, and into the room where the delegate meeting was being held. On the way to the meeting she stopped at 6407 West Sixth Street, where another lady joined her and they proceeded to the meeting. This person was believed to be SADIE ORNITZ, wife of SAM ORNITZ, who is known to reside at this address.

Directives obtained by Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1357 also verified that this was a meeting of branch delegates to the State Convention, and this informant had personal knowledge of this fact. (X) u

The writer personally spotted CARL WINTER, MAX SILVER, PETTIS FERRY (negro), all county officials of the party, at this meeting. (X) u

MARGARET MALTZ, by way of identification, is the wife of ALBERT MALTZ, President of the Hollywood Chapter of the LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WRITERS, and an associate of HERBERT BIBERMAN and JOHN HOWARD LAWSON. Neither BIBERMAN nor LAWSON was spotted in attendance at this meeting, but this is not considered unusual since during the course of this investigation, they have attended no meetings of this nature that are known. However, WALDO SALT was in attendance from the movie industry crowd, and he has been associated with BIBERMAN and LAWSON. It will be noted that ALEXANDER STEVENS stayed at the home of SALT during his visit for conferences with BIBERMAN, LAWSON, and others on May 2nd to 4th, 1942. ELIZABETH LEACH and a person identified as VERA HARRIS, wife of LOU HARRIS, both of whom attended many meetings at the home of JOHN HOWARD LAWSON during the course of this investigation, were also observed at this meeting. (X) u

On May 24, 1943, Confidential National Defense Informant LA HB-1 advised that BIBERMAN again conferred with MARGARET MALTZ, at which (X) u

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"As he has gone deeper into America's past, Lawson has been able to uncover the social and economic forces that motivated the people and the movements of other days, and he has found much neglected truth.

"One of the worst aspects of most of our histories is the failure to personalize the past," he continued. "Our leaders are made too abstract—we don't learn enough about their different economic and cultural backgrounds. In my lectures and in my book I try to bring forward the actual, living variety of history."

"The book of which he spoke so casually is an American history on which he has been working for a long time.

"John Howard Lawson's ability to 'bring forward the actual, living variety of history' is attested by the many people who have heard his lectures at the Writers School in Hollywood, who have absorbed some of his enthusiasm, have delighted in his humor, and have gone away with a new understanding.

"As there is no room large enough at the Workers School to accommodate the numbers who are expected to register for this course, the lectures on the American Democratic Tradition will be given at the Unitarian Church, 2936 West Eighth Street, on Friday evenings beginning May 7."

This course by LAWSON began May 17, 1943, having been set back from its original opening date of April 30th. Informants attended the fifth, seventh, and eighth of this series of lectures at the Unitarian Church. [Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1357 attended the fifth lecture and this lecture was delivered by ALBERT MALTZ, subject of whose talk was, "The Negro in the Civil War".] During this lecture MALTZ dwelled on the bad conditions existing among the Negroes, and mistreatment, etc. This informant advised that B. H. JAMES, 310 North Kenmore, Membership Director of 58A Branch, Midtown Section, Los Angeles County Communist Party, was in charge of ticket sales of this meeting, and MAX SCHOEN, son of ELLA SCHOEN, who is a Communist, according to the informant, was in charge of literature sales. A regular Communist Party literature table was in evidence at the meeting. QW

On June 18, 1943, Confidential National Defense Informant LA-1358 advised that JOHN HOWARD LAWSON was the speaker, having been introduced by EVA SHAFRAN. LAWSON's subject was the failure of the reconstruction period after the Civil War. He spoke on American History between 1875 and 1900, dwelling on the efforts of labor to unionize, the failure of the Negroes of that time to obtain the right to vote due to the white people of the time. In this connection informant advised that he read part of QW

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a letter written by a candidate advocating that the people, "shoot the Negro down in his tracks should he attempt to vote." Literature at this meeting was sold by MAX SCHOEN. *Q U*

On June 25, 1943, Special Agent DAVID A. MAC CULLOCH attended the eighth and the last class of this course at which JOHN HOWARD LAWSON was the speaker. The meeting lasted for one and one-half hours, during which time LAWSON discussed the history of this country from the Spanish-American war in 1898, which, he stated was the start of the imperialistic trend of this nation. He also discussed the increase and popularity of the Socialist movement from 1900 to 1912, reflecting in the increasing popularity of EUGENE V. DEBS. He stated that out of the first world war came the first and greatest Democratic state, the Soviet Union. With the increase in power, the imperialistic nations, the fifth column, and the Fascists began a plan toward the destruction of the U.S.S.R. and United States even sent troops to Siberia, refusing to recognize the Soviet Union. He stated that the attack by Germany against Russian forces June 22, 1941, was perfectly logical and that the U.S.S.R. was the only state between Germany and the United States because of its great strength as a Democratic power. Concerning the race riots, the zoot suit riots, etc., recently occurring in Beaumont, Texas, Detroit, and Los Angeles, he stated that they were not just chance occurrences, but were planned by the Fascist fifth column, and to look upon them as merely a social problem was to miss the point as the real reason was deeper than that and that the only way it could be solved would be the exposure of the Axis agents active in our midst. The entire speech was in regard to the Fascist fifth column at work in the United States spreading race hatred, discrimination, and red-baiting. Not once was the war with Japan mentioned. According to Agent MAC CULLOCH, whose information is contained in a memorandum for the file dated June 26, 1943, the entire meeting was pretty well summed up by an unidentified lady who, on leaving the hall, casually remarked, "He said nothing revolutionary whatever or new, but the manner he has of saying things gives one new faith in his beliefs."

Confidential National Defense Informant IA-1357, who also attended this meeting, advised that there were approximately sixty persons present and it appeared to him to be the same crowd that he has seen at other Communist meetings, forum, etc. *Q U*

At the meeting on June 18th, Confidential National Defense Informant IA-1358 advised that there were approximately forty-five persons present. Copies of the reports of these informants, together with the receipts they obtained from the meetings of June 18th and June 25th properly identified, are being made serials in this file. *Q U*

At the final meeting of this class EVA SHAFFAN announced *Q U*

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* Will conduct inquiries about BILLIE EKEL, in care of LILLIAN EKEL'S TEA ROOM, 345 East Seventh Street, Long Beach, California, (telephone - Long Beach 6-4065).

* Will contact the appropriate officers of the W. T. GRANT COMPANY, 810 South Spring Street, to ascertain the identity and Communistic tendencies of H. A. BARTH.

* Will ascertain subject BIBERMAN's activities prior to his leadership in the American Peace Mobilization through Confidential National Defense Informant IA-1138.

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